

## The Third Variable between Abortion and Christianity

### Introduction

A hot topic that has been circling around the United States has been the debate on abortions. Abortions are a medical or surgical procedure that terminates a pregnancy. There are certain groups that support the right for women to be able to receive a safe abortion, and there are some groups that consider abortion to be murder. One of the largest groups in the United States that consider abortion to be murder are religious groups, specifically Christianity. Another group that happens to be against abortion rights is one of the two political parties within the United States, the conservative/republican party. My research question goes off the facts that if you identify as being part of one of these individual groups, there's a good chance that your views are against abortion, but if you are both conservative and Christian, is there a higher chance that you will be against abortion? Or will that affect your views to lean against abortions more? My theory is that if you are both Christian and conservative, your views are even more likely to be against abortion rather than if you were just Christian or just conservative. This theory can be tested through an extensive research study which will explain abortion history, religion, political affiliation, and those groups views on abortion together and separate. (218 words)

### Background

The ongoing feud between abortion laws, Christians and conservatives has been happening for decades now. Both Christians and conservatives are against abortions, which can also be known as being pro-life. Their views can be explained in the book *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Which states that "human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception (Poston & Disney).<sup>1</sup>" This book states that even if the fetus is only a few cells, the Christian community considers that to be a life and if one were to abort those cells, it would be considered murder. Not all of those who identify as being Christian, conservatives or both are pro-lifers though, there are some that have other views. Those views are those of the majority that believes that a woman can do what she wants with her body, because it's her body. They believe that she has the choice to have an abortion, and that her body shouldn't be regulated by the government. These people who care about women and their bodily autonomy are pro-choice. The research that I am doing is important because these are current events that have been getting more and more intense. Within the next five years, there will be some laws removed or added that will either protect or reverse the access to safe abortions. My goal is to provide enough information within this research proposal to set a great background of knowledge for those considering taking in my research. The information that is provided within this proposal will hopefully foreshadow the results from my research method I am offering. The research method I am aiming on doing is

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<sup>1</sup> Poston, L., & Disney, L. (n.d.). *When Does Human Life Begin? Conception and Ensoulment*. Mosaic. [https://mosaic.messiah.edu/brs\\_ed/7/](https://mosaic.messiah.edu/brs_ed/7/).

a survey. This survey will spread out to different groups of people and ask numerous questions about the participants religious status, political affiliation, views on abortions, and much more. (322 words)

#### Literature review

Abortion has always been through a rocky road when it comes to the law. Since 1973, abortion has been legal and has “secured women’s rights to terminate pregnancies for any reason within the first trimester of pregnancy<sup>2</sup>.” The current status of abortion today is stricter than they have ever been. States are tightening their abortion laws which includes creating a heartbeat bill that bans terminating pregnancies if there’s a fetal heartbeat. These laws becoming stricter are a strategy to attempt to bring the cases to the Supreme Court. There, they will try to attempt to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, due to the Supreme Court’s conservative majority of 6-3. It is said that the Supreme Court will listen to one of the dozen cases in their next term and have a decision by the summer of 2022<sup>3</sup>. The progression of the law has changed a lot since the original passing of *Roe v Wade*. When reported in 2018, out of the 1193 abortion bans that have been enacted since the *Roe v wades* case, one third of those bans have been sanctioned in those past seven years between 2011 and 2018.<sup>4</sup> From the beginning of when *Roe* was enacted, there were four constitutional pillars. These four pillars were 1. Abortion is held to the highest constitutional protection level just like all the other essential constitutional rights. 2. The government must stay neutral. 3. Before the fetus is viable, the government can restrict abortion to safeguard the woman’s health. 4. After viability, the government may prohibit abortion, except for exceptions where the woman’s health or life is at risk.<sup>5</sup> Throughout the years, these pillars have changed. Today there are only two of the four remaining pillars still standing. They changed that the state can now not be neutral, and states can favor fetal rights if it isn’t excessive or unwanted<sup>6</sup>. In a 2018 Survey of Family Planning and Women’s Lives, there was no surprising knowledge

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<sup>2</sup> Nunez-Eddy, C., & Seward, S. (n.d.). *The Embryo Project Encyclopedia*. *Roe v. Wade (1973)* | The Embryo Project Encyclopedia. <https://embryo.asu.edu/pages/roe-v-wade-1973>.

<sup>3</sup> Liptak, A. (2021, May 17). *Supreme Court to Hear Abortion Case Challenging Roe v. Wade*. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/17/us/politics/supreme-court-to-hear-abortion-case-challenging-roe-v-wade.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Hall, A., & Raphael, T. J. (n.d.). In the 45 years since *Roe v. Wade*, states have passed 1,193 abortion restrictions. <https://www.pri.org/stories/2018-01-22/45-years-roe-v-wade-states-have-passed-1193-abortion-restrictions>.

<sup>5</sup> Goldberg, J. (2021, January 26). *Roe v. Wade - Then and Now*. Center for Reproductive Rights. <https://reproductiverights.org/roe-v-wade-then-and-now/>.

<sup>6</sup> Goldberg, J. (2021, January 26). *Roe v. Wade - Then and Now*. Center for Reproductive Rights. <https://reproductiverights.org/roe-v-wade-then-and-now/>.

when it came to abortion access. The survey suggested that women who lived in states where there are 4 or more laws restricting abortion were more likely to have trouble accessing medical and surgical abortions compared to a less restrictive abortion states<sup>7</sup>. Although laws are becoming stricter, it's found that attitudes about abortion have been ever changing throughout the past 30 years. <sup>8</sup> These views have gone from a more submissive attitude to one that is more open-minded, educated, and permissive. This means that the views from religious groups and those of the republican party over the years have started to see that women should have the right to do what they want with their bodies. Views on abortion have started to become more intense to the extent that there's an even greater divide between the political parties. The political parties have become very polarized and began to strongly associate being pro-life with the conservative/republican party<sup>9</sup> and being pro-choice with the Liberal/democratic party. These connections can show us a visual that the states that are red happen to have more restrictive abortion laws and states that are blue happen to have the least restrictive laws. We can also find the same results of abortion restrictions for states that are more religious versus states that are less religious<sup>10</sup>. In the past 50 years, abortion rights have become more and more strict and will continue to become stricter until the Supreme court takes a case. (587 words)

Reviewing Christianity, we know that there's some Christians that value their religion different than the next. That means more praying or higher church attendance etc. There are different types of Christians within the religion who values different things within their religion. There is one group of people who value tradition and believe that whatever they receive is a gift from God and that should be cherished and passed down from generation to generation<sup>11</sup>. The other group of people are those who believe that God has provided them with the world it is their job to improve the world and make it better place<sup>12</sup>. (133 words)

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<sup>7</sup> h Perreira, K. M., Johnston, E. M., Shartzler, A., & Yin, S. (n.d.). *Perceived Access to Abortion Among Women in the United States in 2018: Variation by State Abortion Policy Context*. <https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/10.2105/AJPH.2020.305659>.

<sup>8</sup> Hoffmann, J. P., & Johnson, S. M. (2005). 162-182. In *Sociology of Religion* (2nd ed., Vol. 66). essay.

<sup>9</sup> Hoffmann, J. P., & Johnson, S. M. (2005). 162-182. In *Sociology of Religion* (2nd ed., Vol. 66). essay.

<sup>10</sup> Lipka, M., & Wormald, B. (2020, May 30). Most and least religious U.S. states. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/02/29/how-religious-is-your-state/?state=alabama>.

<sup>11</sup> O'Callaghan, P. (n.d.). *Is the Christian believer conservative or liberal?* Taylor & Francis. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23753234.2019.1616580>.

<sup>12</sup> O'Callaghan, P. (n.d.). *Is the Christian believer conservative or liberal?* Taylor & Francis. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23753234.2019.1616580>.

When we review political affiliation, we only view two different groups. Those who are conservative and those who are liberal. These groups are seemed to be opposite and that is because they have different personal values<sup>13</sup>. Liberals or leftists often lean towards universalism, self-direction and the “openness to change”, whereas conservatives or rightists place more value on tradition, security, power, and achievement.<sup>14</sup> Conservatives’ values for tradition can explain why conservatives are often against abortion, and that’s because it violates the traditional “female ideals” of womanhood. It violates motherhoods instincts of nurturing and her purity and goes against values of being a good woman<sup>15</sup>. These ideas are traditional views that are in the past, women are not seen as only being a good woman if she’s pure and nurturing. Today women are multifaceted and are evolving with their own views and own choices, which is where the liberal views of openness to change correlates. (222 words)

When putting everything together, you must realize that there’s different combinations of everyone. You can have a conservative Christian, an atheist conservative, a Christian liberal, and an atheist liberal. These groups can have subgroups of each other in terms of being for or against abortion. Although there are different combinations of these groups those who are conservative happen to have very similar views to those who are Christian and believe in tradition and passing down presents to generations to come. That is why you often see the phrase “conservative Christian” clumped together. For example, within the United States government within the house of representatives, 99.2% of the republican party identifies as being Christian, compared to the democratic party’s 78% identifying as being Christian<sup>16</sup>. Conservatives/republicans make up around half of congress, they are almost all Christians, and almost all vote against abortion. Liberals/democrats make up the other half, a good amount identify as being Christian, yet they advocate for pro-

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<sup>13</sup> Jost, J. T., & Sterling, J. (n.d.). *Liberal and Conservative Representations of the Good Society: A (Social) Structural Topic Modeling Approach* - Joanna Sterling, John T. Jost, Curtis D. Hardin, 2019. SAGE Journals. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2158244019846211>.

<sup>14</sup> Jost, J. T., & Sterling, J. (n.d.). *Liberal and Conservative Representations of the Good Society: A (Social) Structural Topic Modeling Approach* - Joanna Sterling, John T. Jost, Curtis D. Hardin, 2019. SAGE Journals. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2158244019846211>.

<sup>15</sup> Norris, A., Bessett, D., Steinberg, J. R., Cavanaugh, M. L., De Zordo, S., & Becker, D. (n.d.). *Abortion Stigma: A Reconceptualization of Constituents, Causes, and Consequences* Alison Norris, MD PhD. <https://www.guttmacher.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/pubs/journals/Abortion-Stigma.pdf>.

<sup>16</sup> *Faith on the Hill: The religious composition of the 116th Congress*. Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project. (2020, May 30). <https://www.pewforum.org/2019/01/03/faith-on-the-hill-116/>.

choice<sup>17</sup>. This difference can make sense when we go back to the different groups of Christians who value different things. Where one of the groups believes in gifts and traditions for God and the other group wanting to improve the world that God gave them. Although there's different combinations, these combinations seem to be the most common and that is why we will test my theory in hopes of proving it. (276 words)

There are multiple different methods that we could pursue to test the theory that if you are conservative and Christian, there's a higher chance of being against abortion. The method that could possibly be the most effective for this type of data search would be if we did a survey, and preferably a large survey. The survey would be a qualitative survey which reaches out to all different races, genders, political affiliations, and religious affiliations. We will put a focus on pulling out those who singularly say Christian, those who say they're just conservative and those who are both. The questions that we would ask on the survey would consist of the main topics of abortion, political affiliation, and religion. Questions would ask for their views on abortion, their religious affiliation, and if they say Christianity, how often do they attend church and how often do you pray. We would then ask their political affiliation and if they are part of a certain party and how closely affiliated, they are with them and then lastly, we would ask about their views about the heartbeat laws. We would look at the Christians and compare their abortion views, look at conservative/ republicans and compare that to their abortion views, and lastly look at those who are both Christian and conservative. The way we will provide this survey will be multiple different methods because we want to reach more than one target audience. We would like to see people of all age groups respond to the survey and the best way to do that is through different platforms. If we wanted to reach a younger audience, we would put a sponsored survey on Instagram or tik tok, if we want to reach the middle-aged age group we would put the survey on Facebook through a possible ad, and lastly if we want to reach the older generations, we can send the survey through a physical copy in the mail or in newspapers. Doing these things will help create the best results and most participating within every age group. (345 words)

If my proposal is accepted and the survey is distributed with the right questions along with the correct delivery of the survey, I expect that my theory would be correct. I would expect that those who are both conservative and Christian to be more likely to be against abortion. I would expect those who have both factors to be more likely to be against abortion than to those who are just conservative or just Christian. If I were to get the results that I have stated within my thesis, I believe that it will prove my theory that you're more likely to be against abortion if you identify as being both conservative and Christian. (114 words)

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<sup>17</sup> Diamant, J. (2021, June 7). *Three-in-ten or more Democrats and Republicans don't agree with their party on abortion*. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/06/18/three-in-ten-or-more-democrats-and-republicans-dont-agree-with-their-party-on-abortion/>.

In conclusion, I believe that my research proposal would be a great opportunity to get a closer look at the relationship between Christianity, conservatism, and abortions. It would provide an answer about the impact that being both conservative and Christian can have on an individual's views on abortions. Pursuing the survey, I believe that it will provide concrete evidence that you're not always against abortions if you are just Christian or just conservative, but there's a higher chance of being against abortions if you identify as being both together. My research and survey would be a good idea to perform for this is real world issues that are currently happening and could affect us in the future for better or for the worse. (123 words)

Final word count 2345

## Work cited

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